

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 KUALA 02179 081039Z
ACTION EA-09

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07
L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15
USIA-06 OMB-01 AID-05 /061 W
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R 080319Z APR 77
FM AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 6795
INFO AMEMBASSY BANGKOK
AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY RANGOON
AMEMBASSY SEOUL
AMEMBASSY TOKYO
CINCPAC

C O N F I D E N T I A L KUALA LUMPUR 2179

CINCPAC ALSO FOR POLAD

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, ASEAN, JA, MY
SUBJECT: VISIT OF JAPANESE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ARITA

REF: (A) MANILA 4707, (B) STATE 073275

1. SUMMARY. DURING HIS STOP IN KUALA LUMPUR, JAPANESE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ARITA REASSURED THE MALAYSIANS THAT THE UNITED STATES WILL MAINTAIN ITS BASIC POLICY TOWARD ASIA AND CONFIRMED THAT JAPAN GIVES A HIGHER PRIORITY TO ASEAN THAN TO INDOCHINA IN ITS SOUTHEAST ASIAN POLICY. END SUMMARY.

2. JAPANESE DEPUTY FOREIGN MINISTER ARITA VISITED
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 KUALA 02179 081039Z

KUALA LUMPUR APRIL 3-5. MAIN PURPOSE OF THE TRIP, AS REPORTED IN THE PRESS AND CONFIRMED TO US BY JAPANESE EMBASSY, WAS TO BRIEF PRIME MINISTER HUSSEIN ONN ON WASHINGTON SUMMIT BETWEEN JAPANESE PRIME MINISTER FUKUDA AND PRESIDENT CARTER. ARITA ALSO CALLED ON FOREIGN MINISTER TENGKU AHMAD RITHAUDDEEN.

3. ACCORDING TO JAPANESE EMBASSY POLITICAL OFFICER HAJIME TSUJIMOTO, HUSSEIN AND RITHAUDDEEN WERE PARTICULARLY CONCERNED ABOUT FUTURE U.S. POLICY TOWARD SOUTHEAST ASIA AND ABOUT JAPANESE VIEWS ON VIETNAMESE ATTITUDE TOWARD ITS NON-COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. SPECIFICALLY, RITHAUDDEEN ASKED ARITA WHETHER U.S. WAS TURNING INWARD UNDER THE CARTER ADMINISTRATION AND THUS HAD LESS INTEREST IN ASIA. ARITA REASSURED FOREIGN MINISTER ALONG LINES OF REF B.

4. IN RESPONSE TO HUSSEIN'S QUESTION ABOUT JAPANESE VIEWS ON VIETNAM, ARITA SAID THERE WAS NO QUESTION THAT THE SRV IS A STRONGLY IDEOLOGICAL COMMUNIST STATE BUT THAT IT HOPES TO RECONSTRUCT ITS ECONOMY WITHOUT UNDUE DEPENDENCE ON EITHER THE PRC OR THE USSR. THIS OFFERS AN OPPORTUINITY FOR THE WEST TO GAIN A CERTAIN MEASURE OF INFLUENCE IN VIETNAM BY OFFERING AID AND EXPLOITING THE VIETNAMESE INSECURITY IN THEIR RELATIONS WITH RUSSIA AND CHINA. ARITA ADMITTED THAT IT IS DIFFICULT NOW TO FORESEE EXACTLY WHAT KIND OF A FUTURE RELATIONSHIP MIGHT EVOLVE BETWEEN THE SRV AND ITS NON-COMMUNIST NEIGHBORS. HOWEVER, HE DID ASSURE HUSSEIN THAT JAPAN PLACES ASEAN FIRST IN ITS POLICY TOWARD SOUTHEAST

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 03 KUALA 02179 081039Z

ASIA AND THAT INDOCHINA IS DEFINITELY OF SECONDARY IMPORTANCE.

5. EMBOFF ASKED TSUJIMOTO WHETHER THE ARITA TRIP WAS MADE IN RESPONSE TO A REQUEST FOR A BRIEFING ON THE WASHINGTON TALKS BY ASEAN OR ANY OF ITS MEMBER GOVERNMENTS, OR WHETHER IT WAS SOLELY A JAPANESE INITIATIVE. HE SAID THAT THE IDEA FOR THE TRIP ORIGINATED IN TOKYO AND THAT ARITA FIRST KNEW ABOUT IT ONLY WHEN FUDUKA ANNOUNCED IN A PRESS CONFERENCE ON HIS WAY HOME FROM WASHINGTON THAT HE WOULD SEND AN ENVOY TO BRIEF THE SOUTHEAST ASIAN GOVERNMENTS.

6. ALTHOUGH TSUJIMOTO WAS CAREFUL TO MAKE NO LINK BETWEEN ARITA'S TRIP AND THE ASEAN INVITATION TO FUKUDA TO COME TO KUALA LUMPUR AFTER THE ASEAN SUMMIT IN AUGUST, HE DID SAY

THAT DETAILS OF THE FUKUDA TRIP WERE DISCUSSED, SPECIFICALLY IN WHAT FORUM FUKUDA AND THE AUSTRALIAN AND NEW ZEALAND PRIME MINISTERS WOULD MEET THEIR ASEAN COUNTERPARTS. ALTHOUGH FINAL PLANS HAVE NOT YET BEEN MADE, IT WAS DECIDED THAT THERE WOULD PROBABLY BE NO MEETING OF THE EIGHT HEADS OF GOVERNMENT IN THE SAME PLACE AT THE SAME TIME, AND THAT THE ASEAN SUMMIT WOULD BE A DISTINCT MEETING SEPARATE FROM THE VISITS OF THE NON-ASEAN LEADERS.

7. TSUJIMOTO WENT OUT OF HIS WAY TO SAY THAT ARITA FOUND HUSSEIN ONN TO BE "SINCERE " DURING THEIR MEETING. WITHOUT FURTHER CLARIFYING WHAT HE MEANT, TSUJIMOTO SAID THAT ARITA HAD NOT FOUND SUCH SINCERITY IN CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 04 KUALA 02179 081039Z

HIS TWO PREVIOUS STOPS IN MANILA AND SINGAPORE.

8. ALTHOUGH NOT DISCUSSED WITH TSUJIMOTO, IT IS WORTH NOTING THAT NATIONAL PRESS SERVICE HAS QUOTED FOREIGN MINISTER RITHAUDDEEN AS DENYING STATEMENTS IN THE U.S. PRESS THAT FUKUDA REQUESTED BY ASEAN GOVERNMENTS TO EXPRESS THEIR HOPE U.S. WOULD MAINTAIN ITS MILITARY AND ECONOMIC PRESENCE IN ASIA (REF B). UNDERHILL

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Message Attributes

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